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THE
HEADS
OF
Mr. FOX'S SPEECH.

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MR. FOX'S STEEL CO.

Ireland vol. 18.

THE
HEADS
OF
Mr. FOX'S SPEECH: *h*

CONTAINING
THE ARGUMENTS

He opposed to the
FOURTH IRISH PROPOSITION,
IN

A Committee of the whole House of Commons,
May 23, 1785.

To which is added a CORRECT LIST of the MINORITY in the House
of COMMONS, on Mr. Chancellor Pitt's IRISH PROPOSITIONS.

L O N D O N:

Printed for J. DEBRETT, opposite *Burlington-House,*
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MDCCLXXXV.

THE
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THE LOST SPEECH

CONTAINING

THE ARGUMENTS

IN

THE CASE OF THE



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THE negociation, carrying on by the present ministry with Ireland, engages the attention, and affects the interests of so great a body of the people of both countries, that it is no wonder, Mr. Fox's opinions on that business should be sought after with avidity.

HIS opposition to the fourth proposition was not given in the newspapers so fully as usual, nor indeed could it be expected that the limits of a newspaper could admit them, and it is in some measure to supply that defect, that this speech is published by itself.

THE

1843

The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the office of the Secretary of the Board of Education, since the last meeting of the Board, on the 1st of January, 1843.

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THE
FOURTH
IRISH PROPOSITION,
As opened by Mr. PITT,
On the 12th of *May**.

THAT it is highly important to the general interests of the British empire, that the laws for regulating trade and navigation should be the same in Great Britain and Ireland ; and therefore that it is ESSENTIAL towards carrying into effect the present settlement, that all laws which have been made or shall be made in Great Britain, for securing exclusive privileges to the

* This proposition was not opened to the Irish Parliament.

ships and mariners of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies and plantations, and for regulating and restraining the trade of the British colonies and plantations, shall be in force in Ireland in the same manner as in Great Britain, and that proper measures should from time to time be taken for effectually carrying the same into execution.

The FOURTH PROPOSITION *with the*
 Amendments *in Italics, as it passed*
the House of Commons.

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Britain and Ireland; and therefore that it is essential, towards carrying into effect the present settlement, that all laws which have been made, or shall be made in Great Britain, for securing exclusive privileges to the ships and mariners of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies and plantations, and for regulating and restraining the trade of the British colonies and plantations, *such laws imposing the same restraints, and conferring the same benefits on the subjects of both kingdoms, should be in force in Ireland, by laws to be passed by the Parliament of that kingdom for the same time, and in the same manner as in Great Britain.*



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MR. FOX began by observing, that when the Irish propositions (as they had been termed) were first laid before the British House of Commons, the minister declared that the consequence must certainly be, that all the complaints of Ireland would be compleatly settled, not only upon fair but upon advantageous terms to Great Britain. That although a participation of our commerce would be granted to Ireland, yet, such was the deliberate wisdom with which the propositions had been framed, that although very great advantages were promised to Ireland, we, in fact, should be adding very considerably to our own.

MR. FOX declared, that, as a friend to Ireland, no man had it more at heart than he had, to grant every advantage to that country, consistent with the safety and welfare of his own. That he was perfectly

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fectly of opinion, the prosperity of Ireland was the prosperity of Great Britain. And, on the other hand, he was also of opinion, that the prosperity of Great Britain undoubtedly must be the prosperity of Ireland.

To promote the welfare of Ireland, and to see that perfect cordiality, and mutual confidence firmly established, which is so essential to the prosperity and happiness of both countries, no man could entertain a sincerer wish, or should exert himself with greater zeal than he was ready to do, in order to accomplish a purpose so necessary for the good of both countries.

MR. Fox declared, that, he should ever consider it to be his duty, as a member of the British Parliament, not only to view the propositions as they may affect the interests of his own country; but, also, to see in what way they will operate upon Ireland. For he considered, that if they should tend to injure the interests of either country, the purpose for which they are intended must be equally and certainly defeated.

THAT

THAT some measures were absolutely necessary to establish content and mutual friendship between Great Britain and Ireland, no man could doubt. But how little the propositions that had been laid before Parliament, were adapted to produce such a happy consequence, every day's examination had more and more confirmed.

THAT this was the fact, with regard to the propositions in general, no one could doubt who had given them the least attention; but, if there was one proposition, more pregnant with objections, and, against which, both countries had greater reason to complain, it was certainly this fourth proposition now under the consideration of the committee. This very proposition would certainly be found to contain matter so injurious to both countries, that instead of producing any thing like salutary consequences; it must, of itself, prove the cause of endless jealousies, ill-blood and animosities between the two countries.

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from his honourable friend behind him, (Mr. Sheridan) respecting this very proposition not having been laid before the Irish Parliament with the rest. Mr. Fox was certainly of opinion that no power of language could do away the charge of insidiousness made by his honourable friend, when the direct attack against the legislative independence of Ireland came to be justly viewed.

MR. Fox called upon the recollection of the committee, by reminding them, that when the original propositions were laid before the House, the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) peremptorily declared that they must pass then,—that they could not be altered,—but that such as they were they must stand or fall together.

WHEN the minister made this declaration, it must also be fresh in the memory of every gentleman present, with what indecent hurry it had been attempted to carry those propositions through the House; as well as with what extreme difficulty he (Mr. Fox) had

had been able to prevent the minister from succeeding in that attempt.

HAD the minister been successful in carrying the original propositions, it is now very well known, that some of the essential interests of this country must have been sacrificed; among which, the East India Company's *Charter* certainly could not be ranked as the least. These facts plainly proved, how necessary it was to take sufficient time, to weigh well the different effects the propositions were likely to produce: several alterations, called amendments, had already been adopted, which at first appeared to lessen the evils the proposition contained; but, they certainly were not adequate to remove those solid objections that still remained against them in general, and this fourth proposition in particular; and, without removing which, the worst and most unhappy consequences must necessarily follow.

MR. Fox declared, that aware, as he undoubtedly was, of the imbecility of the councils by which the Irish propositions had been framed, and doubtful, as he must certainly

certainly be, of the wisdom or even fairness of any negociation carried on by the present ministry, he owned however, that his apprehensions had been principally roused by that hurry, with which the minister attempted to drive the original propositions through the House of Commons, and the difficulty with which he had been able to get the opportunity that had been acquired to consider them with some attention.

ADDED to this, he could not forget, how every species of obstruction had been adopted to prevent information from the different manufacturers being brought to the bar of the House of Commons; from whom, information of the most valuable kind ought to have been looked for in the present business. Nor could he forget the duplicity with which some of these men had been treated by ministry. It was the characteristic of men who mean to deal fairly, to admit every information. Men of a different description do every thing in their power to prevent it. That this has been the conduct of the present ministry is sufficiently established by every part of their conduct

conduct relative to this negotiation. And yet such was the confused texture of this business, that what with the ignorance, duplicity, and hurry which had appeared, it was difficult to say which were most conspicuous; but, taken altogether, it was highly necessary, to watch, with the keenest attention, the conduct of the ministry.

By the original propositions, that ministry had attempted to hasten through the House of Commons, it was now very well known that they would have given up the power of the British Parliament, to renew the East India Company's charter.

To what motive are we to impute this circumstance in the propositions? Is it to be looked upon as an effect of the minister's ignorance?—Or, is it a concealed and secret sacrifice intended to be made, of one of the principal branches of the revenue of Great Britain?

If we are to attribute this sacrifice merely to that stupidity which so eminently displays itself throughout the whole conduct
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of ministry, he said he should be glad to know, what reliance could be placed on any of their measures? Were men, capable of such neglect, worthy to be entrusted with the concerns of a great commercial nation?—If on the other hand, we were to imagine, that ministry were aware of giving up the power of the British Parliament to renew the East India Company's charter, what must the public think of their fidelity to that Company, upon whose shoulders they had raised themselves to their present station! In either way, Mr. Fox observed, the consequence must prove equally fatal to every thing like confidence in the present ministry.

BUT what rendered the conduct of ministry most atrocious, in the propositions that had been attempted to be passed, was, that these very propositions, which ultimately went to the annihilation of the East India Company, as a Company, all together, were introduced by that very man, who owed his popularity to the pretence of vindicating their charter, which all the world knew had been abused! Whose abuses had
been

been recognized by Parliament,—Abuses, that never had been denied, nor attempted to be denied.

YET, we have seen that very man, who was the pretended friend of the East India Company's charter, merely because it was a charter, introducing propositions as a minister, by which, not only the charter itself, but, by which, the very annihilation of the Company, as a Company, must have been the consequence ! The public in general, and that Company in particular, are now sensible, or soon must be sensible, who are the real friends to the real interests of the East India Company.

MR. Fox begged leave to observe, that every species of misrepresentation had been made use of, to mislead the minds of the public, relative to the bill he had the honour to introduce, for the better regulation of the East India Company's affairs. These misrepresentations had been but too successful at the moment, but, he felt that confidence, which fills the mind of every man who is conscious of having acted upon just principles for

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the good of the empire, that time would open the eyes of the public, and shew them who were the real friends to the true interests and prosperity of the country in general, and that company in particular.

MR. Fox declared in very animated language, that no man was a firmer friend to personal liberty, or held the security of personal property more sacred than himself. That no measure of his, ever had, or ever should contain an infringement of either; and, although such an idea had been maliciously interwoven with his East India Bill, yet, that such an idea was false and groundless, he boldly maintained, and defied any man to prove that there was any foundation for it.

THE charter by which the East India Company held the monopoly of that trade was like all other charters. It was a charter, granted upon certain conditions, to a certain number of men for the better conducting a plan; for their advantage, no doubt, but not merely and entirely for their advantage, but for that of the community at large.

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THE East India Company's charter was therefore a *trust*, which so long as the conditions were fulfilled, and not injurious to the public, ought not to be interrupted or molested.—But, when that trust had been abused, would any friend to the present government pretend to say, that it was not the duty of Parliament to interfere? Or that by a violation of the conditions on their part, they did not themselves forfeit their charter?

THE East India Company's charter is precisely a trust—not an irrevocable grant. And the conditions upon which Parliament can grant such a charter must be consistent with the good of the empire, without which Parliament could not grant a monopoly to any set of men whatever; nor could Parliament, consistently with its duty to the public, permit any charter to be continued, whose conditions had been violated, or become injurious to the public good.

THE abuses of the East India Company's trust, it was well known, had been recognized by Parliament, and in this House by a very large majority.—Their misconduct had

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not only disgraced this country abroad, but threatened bankruptcy and ruin to their trade at home. And, such had been the consequences, that Parliament had not only been obliged to forego some of its claims on the Company, but to administer considerable assistance to save it from destruction.

To preserve that trade, which he well knew was essential to the British revenue, he introduced his bill, and Mr. Fox observed, that in the hour when popular prejudice was at its height, he had always stood forward with this declaration.—That he was ever ready to avow that bill, and he was sure that time would shew its necessity, though perhaps, too late to effect these salutary consequences, so greatly wanted to give stability and prosperity to the East-India Company's affairs.

MR. Fox observed, that his bill was founded on the necessity of a regulation of the East-India Company's charter;—not to remove the property, or to affect it; but to give it that permanency and support which its tendency to dissolution avowedly stood in need of.—But what was the conduct of the
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right honourable gentleman on that business? why, although it was proved on all hands that the charter had been abused, and that the conditions upon which it had been granted had been violated—yet he opposed the bill, and defended the charter, merely because it was a charter.—

To see groundless apprehensions excited by men whose understandings it is impossible to respect, is not impossible. That the right honourable gentleman was successful in exciting those groundless apprehensions is well known;—and now let us see upon what degree of consistency, and what degree of sincerity his friendship to the East-India Company is really founded—why, the proofs of them are to be found, and will remain for ever against him in these very propositions. The first negociation he was engaged in, as a minister, he made their charter and their existence as a company, a sacrifice—an unnecessary—an unsolicited, wanton, or careless, or treacherous sacrifice to Ireland.—He (Mr. Fox) for one, should never consent to make a surrender of the East-India Company's charter; and zealous as he undoubtedly

edly was to see the prosperity of Ireland, yet he never could consent to place this country in so humiliating a situation, that it should be obliged to solicit the consent of the Irish Parliament for leave to grant a renewal of the East-India Company's charter.—Upon that trade, Great-Britain depended for a considerable revenue; and this the minister ought to have remembered.—Was it to be imagined that Ireland would have returned so immense an advantage; or, that the Irish Parliament would have been justified in giving it up again; although they had obtained it unsolicited, through the ignorance, or some worse motive, of our ministry, and, it should even have appeared without their intention? Undoubtedly it would have been absurd to expect any such thing. Once gone, there was an end of it for ever.

OF the propositions now before Parliament, the fact had turned out, that the more they were considered, the more he found them liable to serious and insuperable objections. The ministry, notwithstanding their boasted determination of carrying them in their original form, had been obliged to
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give it up, and, thence, had proved, to all the world, that they could not vindicate them, and that they themselves now considered them as originally inadequate.—That they had stood upon ground which they found not tenable, and therefore, to make them less exceptionable, certain additions and amendments had been adopted.

But could any gentleman take upon him to say, that the amendments were sufficient to remove the evils contained in the propositions? certainly not. And it was his (Mr. Fox's) opinion, that it would be infinitely better to the peace and harmony of the two countries, that no treaty at all should take place, than that the propositions now before the committee should. For unless such a plan was devised as should effectually remove the grounds of uneasiness, without being materially detrimental to either country, it were better, doubtless, that no plan at all should be put into execution.

Mr. Fox then said, that the propositions were to be considered as a treaty between two independent powers for the mutual advantage

vantage of both. It was a bargain going on between them, to this purpose, "I will give you so much, for so much."

IN the construction of all fair bargains, it is ever understood that both parties are to be benefited; that neither is to be wronged; that neither is to be injured.

BUT this fourth proposition possesses the most extraordinary qualities that ever marked a negotiation.—It promises so much to Ireland, that it threatens the existence of many of our most valuable manufactories. It also demands, a surrender, from Ireland, of her legislative independence.

TO grant Ireland advantages detrimental to the immediate support of the British Empire, can never be required by Ireland; and ought not to be given by us. To grant Ireland advantages, and require a price she cannot accede to, without relinquishing her legislative independence, would be an insult to her understanding to expect.

YET such is the absolute tendency of this fourth proposition, and such the consequences

quences that must take place, if it be carried.

THE complaints of Ireland undoubtedly merited every attention, and might, if not removed by wise and salutary measures, prove the cause of serious consequences. But did any one imagine that her complaints were to be relieved by advantages arising from a participation of our trade, when she, on the other hand, was to be obliged to relinquish the independence of her parliament? Would not that resumption of the legislative power of the British Parliament over that of Ireland, be a means to defeat every advantage to be expected from a participation of our trade? Undoubtedly it would. And in this case, Ireland makes an absolute and certain surrender of what is her chief pride, I mean the independence of her Parliament, for a participation, the advantages of which, Great-Britain can always defeat by her resumed power over the Parliament of Ireland.

THAT the uneasiness of Ireland is worthy of the greatest exertions of our abilities, and requires immediate attention, must be admitted.

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ted.—But when the effects of this proposition shall take place on the manufacturers of this country who have applied by petition—are we to imagine that the complaints of the people of England will be less formidable, when they shall find their interests sacrificed? Does any man pretend to say, that a commotion in England would be less alarming than discontent in Ireland.

THE necessity of pursuing this business with the utmost circumspection—the necessity of acting upon deliberation arises from this circumstance—that, the propositions, when acceded to by Ireland, would and must be FINAL.

AN honourable gentleman behind me, (Mr. Dempster) imagines it is necessary that these propositions should be tried, because something was necessary to be done; and, is clearly in an error respecting the nature of the present negociation. He considers it as differing from the treaty with Scotland (which forms the union) as that cannot be altered, because, (says he) one of the parties who framed it is no more, meaning the Scottish Parliament. He imagines,

gines, that the present propositions can be altered, because both the Parliaments who agreed to them will still remain.

IN this Mr. Fox begged leave to observe the honourable gentleman had totally misunderstood the fact.

THE propositions, when agreed to by the British and Irish Parliaments, would form a solemn treaty, that neither country could afterwards alter, or infringe, without a direct violation of good faith. And in this he held the language and idea of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and in this, and in this only, he agreed with him.

HOWEVER detrimental the propositions, therefore, might hereafter be found to either country—*that* country could not redress herself; for, such was the nature of the treaty. Did they not therefore demand the most deliberate investigation?

THE alterations that the propositions had already undergone were standing proofs, that no dependence ought to be placed in the wis-

dom of those who originally offered them to Parliament.

AFTER the declaration made by the minister, upon his first laying the propositions before Parliament, that they must stand or fall together ; his mortification could not be small, to find himself forced to submit to alterations, in order to preserve that majority, from which, he had received so many proofs of acquiescence to his measures.

SUPPORTED as he (Mr. Pitt) often had boasted he was, yet he had certainly been disappointed on the present business. He had not found the present House of Commons pliant enough entirely to forget their duty to their country. He had been forced to admit amendments ; but, whether with a view to benefit this or that country, or only to maintain that station he now filled, the public must be left to judge.

THAT the minister had solemnly declared he would admit no alteration in the original propositions is a fact. Did he keep his word ? No ; but by acting as he has done, it is plain
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his confidence in the support of the present House of Commons begins to abate. And there is little doubt, but as they recede from the minister's confidence, they will rise in the good opinion of the public. For perhaps, a more general and better founded alarm had never spread itself all over the kingdom than had been excited by the propositions.

THE people have been very slow in their apprehensions of the present ministry. From the present Parliament, undoubtedly the people had a right to expect the strongest exertions, and the most unremitting care for the general good. The majority had been sent to Parliament under the most popular approbation, though founded in delusion, that ever had marked a general election. Yet, of the ministry, the people have shewn by the petitions that croud the table, that, they have not, now, that confidence they once had; and that they are more seriously alarmed for the safety of their trade and manufactures, and in a degree, that no minister had ever dared to expose them to before.

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LITTLE, indeed, could the people suspect, that the same man who made himself popular by a clamorous support of a charter which had been abused—would, when in power, have attempted to hurry propositions through the House, that entirely gave up for ever the power of renewing that very charter! For no man would pretend to say, it would have been doing less, if the minister had been able to pass the original propositions.

BUT with what astonishment must the people behold him, engaged in a business, by which, so many manufactories must be exposed to ruin, that, at one blow swept away the means of existence to thousands of the manufacturers of Great Britain!

THAT these were facts, the petitions upon the table proved. And petitions from a more numerous, or more respectable body of men (however neglected and insulted by ministry) had never been presented to this House before.

MUCH, though an ill founded reliance was placed on the amendments that had been made.

made. But were they adequate to remove the evils with which the propositions were loaded? No. Had the petitions ceased to come in since the amendments had been adopted? No. Had ministry been able to get any one set of manufacturers in the kingdom to approve of the propositions notwithstanding the amendments? No.—They have not been able to obtain one paper of approbation to lay upon that table, that groans with the mass of petitions against the propositions. Was the conduct of the ministry sanctioned by any one set of men in the kingdom, who had appeared in the business?—No. Is not every man in an alarm who has the least sense of the danger of the propositions?—Certainly.

THAT this fourth proposition contained in it subject of serious alarm to the manufacturers of Great Britain was fully established.

BUT let us see how Ireland will be affected. Will she only be benefited? Is there nothing prejudicial to her interests contained in this proposition?—Undoubtedly yes.
For

For it is made a part of it, that she must relinquish her legislative independence, and, adopt again, in future, laws made by the British Parliament.

To take a more direct view of this proposition:—It will be found that where the ministry have not displayed their imbecility—they have been insidious—where they have not been insidious they have been treacherous. And by one, or other, or, all these, have they been directed in their prosecution of this very proposition now before us.

My honourable friend behind me, has clearly established the insidious conduct of ministry, in their not having laid this proposition before the Irish Parliament with the others; particularly, as, by it, Ireland binds herself to resign her legislative independence.*

IF

* ON Mr. Taylor, the chairman of the Committee, reading the fourth proposition,—Mr. Sheridan got up, and observed, that it was not the same that had been read the night before. To which Mr. Pitt replied, that the alteration

IF it should be pretended that there was no insidious intention in not carrying this proposition before that Parliament—it becomes a proof of their imbecility in not having done so—because it is deemed *essential*: and therefore, it proves, that ministry had not been capable of finishing and compleating their system to lay before Ireland.

IF it should be pretended that there is no meaning in the clause which binds the Irish to adopt the British acts of Parliament, and, that Ireland will not be bound by it, then must the whole be treachery to this country.

As a proof of the imbecility of ministry, and how distant this negotiation is from the

alteration observed by the honourable gentleman, had been made in consequence of a gesture he perceived on that side of the House, when the proposition was read.—Mr. Sheridan, in his speech on this proposition, declared, (what was not attempted afterwards to be denied by the ministry,) “ That this proposition though declared to be the *essence* of the whole system, in not having been laid before the Irish Parliament with the rest, and containing a clause to reassume the legislative power of the British Parliament over that of Ireland—was a conduct *insidious* according to all the worst definitions of the term *insidious*.

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estimation due to a well digested plan ; Mr. Fox observed, that very early in this evening's debate, the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Pitt) had informed us, that one of the alterations called amendments in this fourth proposition, was made in consequence of some *gestures* he perceived on this side of the House, when the proposition was read in the Committee the last time of meeting.

CAN a stronger picture be given, how little administration is able to rely upon their own deliberations, than is conveyed in this declaration of the minister ? That nothing permanent or beneficial to either country, could be expected from the councils of those who framed the propositions, I well knew. But, that such a mark should be set upon them by the minister, as this, that he had adopted an alteration barely upon perceiving a *gesture* on this side of the House, was an acknowledgement, how little they could depend on their own judgments, beyond what I could have looked for.

WHAT could the people think of the whole system—When a gesture is the avowed cause,

cause, by the minister, of an alteration in one of the Irish propositions, which is declared *essential towards carrying into effect the present settlement*, and forms one of the most important branches of that system, which is to give content to Ireland, and mutual happiness to both kingdoms !—

THIS very system, which the same minister told us, must stand or fall together,—we now find, by the same minister, is become so weak in their own eyes, that a gesture is a sufficient reason to make an alteration in it. Such is the consistency and firmness of the present administration.

NOTWITHSTANDING this *gesticulated* alteration, the original evil still remains. But, like every other alteration made in what is in itself radically bad, every amendment (as they are called) only shews the original deformity of the propositions in stronger and stronger colours.

THIS fourth proposition, as it now stands, can never be agreed to. The first and second part are incompatible, and it is impossible that both countries can agree to it.

IN the first part, Ireland is promised a participation of our trade. This must afford, at first sight, a fruitful prospect to her. But what are the terms upon which she is to attain this participation? Why, by binding herself to adopt such British acts of Parliament hereafter to be made, as Great Britain shall think fit to send there. Will Ireland agree to this with her eyes open? And will they not discover the surrender demanded of them, on the first perusal of the proposition? Undoubtedly they will, for to suppose they will not, would be estimating them a nation of idiots.

HOWEVER detrimental an unlimited participation of our trade may be, to our manufacturers, yet, the benefit to Ireland must be remote. And Ireland, by this proposition, in surrendering their legislative independence, gives up a certain good for an uncertain benefit.

IF a man were to set about framing a proposition, that could contain matter most objectionable to both countries, he could not frame one more compleatly so than this fourth proposition.

BECAUSE

BECAUSE the advantages held out by the first part of it, are overbalanced by the demand of a surrender of the legislative power of Ireland. Hereafter, Ireland has no power to consult her own interests, but must adopt the British acts of Parliament; and, having once agreed to the propositions, she from that time has no alternative, but must adopt the laws framed here, and sent to her.

Is it imagined the people of Ireland will not see through this farce as favour? Will not the mind of an Irishman revolt now at the idea of keeping up the form of a Parliament, who must register those laws which shall hereafter be sent to Ireland? They can have no alternative, nor can they call one of these laws into question, or debate even upon their merits: having agreed to accept these propositions, they will be bound, for ever, to obey this condition.

AN attempt has been made, by the opposite side of the House, to assert, that whatever the consequences may be to Ireland she will have no right to complain, because the propositions originated in her own Parliament.

WITH

With respect to the fourth proposition, this argument, mean as it certainly is, cannot be applied, as it did not originate in Ireland. But, as to laying any stress upon the propositions coming from Ireland officially, it is well known and generally admitted, they spring originally from the ministry here. Therefore there can be no advantage taken against Ireland on account of the propositions coming from her Parliament.

To impose upon a people, under any pretence, but particularly at the same moment you are telling them of granting them advantages which they did not possess before, could only be attempted by the worst of men, and the most profligate of ministers.

EVEN if such a trick could be successful, will any man pretend to say that *an imposition* is the most likely way to heal the disquietude of the people of Ireland? Does any man pretend to say, that a system built upon such principles is capable of establishing any thing like a harmonious or permanent under-

understanding between the two countries? He must be a visionary in politics, indeed, who could entertain an idea so absurd.

In order to illustrate this position, Mr. Fox begged leave to suppose a case, that we were carrying on a negotiation with any foreign power that were friendly towards us. And suppose that the minister of this country, induced that power, to prefer such and such proposals to our Parliament. When they found that they had been trepanned into an imposition, is it to be imagined they would abide by it, merely because they had been seduced by our ministry to be the proposers of it? Undoubtedly they would not. And indeed, so far from thinking themselves bound to abide by it under such circumstances, their pride and interest would feel doubly wounded; and, the treachery of such a minister would operate with double force, to make them reject it more firmly and with greater resentment.

As, Ireland, by this proposition, must be obliged to adopt whatever laws Great-Britain in her wisdom should see fit to make
for

for the regulation of that trade, which Ireland is to share—is it not the most obvious thing in the world, that having that power, the British Parliament would abandon the interest of this country, if, in framing her laws, they were not particularly attentive to the particular interests of Great-Britain? No man can doubt it. Yet, if we were even to allow that this should not happen, and that it never did happen, yet, still, such is the natural jealousy of human nature, such the apprehension naturally raised by giving power to others, that suspicions will unavoidably rise, and the natural consequences of such suspicion must follow.

THE chiefest aim of Ireland in all her late endeavours, was, to obtain an independent Parliament, and she is now possessed of a legislature independent of Great-Britain. Is it to be imagined, that under the idea of getting a participation of our trade she will relinquish that power? It would in fact be yielding up her independency entirely to do so, and it would be estimating them a nation of idiots, to suppose they would give up the principal characteristic of a free people, or,
to

to make a certain sacrifice for a promised benefit they never may be the better for.

EVEN if Ireland agreed to surrender her legislative independence, and bound herself to adopt in silence whatever laws Great-Britain shall hereafter think proper to impose; are we to expect the same obedience to those laws as if they were framed by their own Parliament? there was, Mr. Fox observed, a material difference between that kind of obedience, which arose from a mind influenced and guided by voluntary and constitutional ideas; and that, which arose from the mind which aimed not beyond that which claimed no higher description than the French gave, by the term *par maniere d'acquiescement*. Tedious and ineffectual must be the obedience paid to laws framed in this country for Ireland now; when that spirit, which alone gives energy and dignity to the execution of all laws is broken and discomfited.

THIS fourth proposition, therefore, is so pregnant with evils and objections, that the framer of it seems only to have been engaged

gaged how to distress us with the difficulty of enumerating them.

Thus stand the objections against this fourth proposition. Objections on all sides unanswerable, solid, and irremoveable. That in the very face and front of them threaten worse consequences, and, in future, greater evils than any that can now exist.

MR. Fox, begged leave to state, before he concluded, that it was the practice of the right honourable gentleman, (Mr. Pitt) in answer to any remarks that he (Mr. Fox) had the honour to submit to that House, to take great pains to make it be believed, that he (Mr. Fox) by exposing the weakness and fallacy of the measures of administration, in effect, created them.

GROSS and absurd as such a mode of argument certainly was, the right honourable gentleman was so constant in the use of it, that he (Mr. Fox) foresaw, that on the present occasion it would form the line of his conduct. Of this, it was only necessary to observe, that it would be incumbent on the
right

right honourable gentleman to prove, how the exposure of an evil could create it.

Mr. Fox, with some warmth, declared, that he hoped he was too well acquainted with his duty in Parliament, to sit there merely to register the measures of any ministry without examining them to the best of his abilities.

If the arguments he has used to shew the fallacy and insufficiency of this fourth proposition, and its direct tendency to injure both countries be not founded upon facts, the good sense of the people of Ireland will pay no regard to them. The manufacturers in Great-Britain will be contented.

ADMINISTRATION have taken some pains to make us believe, that if they can carry this fourth proposition in the Irish Parliament, there is an end of the business, and an end to all apprehensions on our part, as the treaty must then be *final*.

BUT let us not deceive ourselves with this idea ; nor think so meanly of the Irish ; that

even if their Parliament should make a surrender of their legislative independence, that the people at large will agree to it, or remain quiet under such a sacrifice.

THERE are recent historical facts, which prove, that the acquiescence of the Irish House of Commons is not conclusive. And it was necessary to make this remark now, that we might not be deceived into a belief, that by their acceding to this fourth proposition, the business must be finally settled.

It was not the acquiescence merely of this or that description of men, that could settle, upon a firm basis, the terms that were equal to bind and cement the interests and prosperity of a great commercial people, if that acquiescence be given in opposition to reason and to facts.

Salus populi suprema lex, was a maxim universally admitted. And such was the unfortunate construction of the fourth proposition, that nothing was more probable, than
that

that both countries would be obliged to appeal to it for relief.

INCOMPETENT as the propositions had been found to quiet the uneasinesses, or, secure the affections of Ireland; and, pernicious as this fourth proposition was, in particular, to the honour or interests of either country; Mr. Fox appealed to the candour and good sense of the committee—whether it would not, now, be more fair, more manly and more honourable, to address the Irish to this purpose, “ That, however desirous
 “ and happy we should be to serve you, yet
 “ in justice to our own country, we find
 “ we cannot grant what we offered. With-
 “ out being the ruin of many here, we
 “ cannot serve an equal number of you,
 “ Without exposing our own country and
 “ its manufactories and manufacturers to
 “ ruin; or, without your yielding up the
 “ independency of your Parliament, we
 “ cannot grant the participation offered to
 “ you.”

GLOOMY, disgraceful, and fatal as this address would prove to the present ministry—
 yet

yet it cannot be denied, but the same address is conveyed to the Irish *indirectly* by this very proposition.

To prosecute this measure, upon terms that never can be adhered to, and, if admitted, can never prove permanent, must prove the source of endless and additional complaints from Ireland, and trouble to Great-Britain.

As a generous and liberal people, the Irish ought to be dealt with accordingly. They are capable of receiving the worst with fortitude, but, it is by no means to be expected, therefore, that they will be imposed upon with patience. The prosperity of Ireland is undoubtedly to be considered as the prosperity of Great-Britain; and, there is no Irishman of sense, but is equally sensible that the prosperity of England is the prosperity of Ireland.

In our prosperity, the Irish are as firmly interested, as we are in theirs; and if they cannot prosper without endangering that trade upon which the revenue of the empire principally depends for support—they would

would ultimately find it a purchase dearly bought.

YET it is by no means my opinion that the prosperity of Ireland may not be promoted without injury to the British trade. But this I am sure of, no good can ever arise from the present measure of ministry, towards carrying on the purposes so much wanted, —that of a perfect and cordial understanding between the two countries.

NOTHING was more plain, and nothing was more true, that the more the Irish propositions had been investigated, the greater number of objections rose up against them. They promised much to Ireland, but take away more than they give. The learned gentleman over the way (Mr. Dundas) has said more to these points probably than he intended; he avowed a caution necessary on his part, to say, how *little* Ireland would be benefited, how *much* Great-Britain would be a gainer. This was the ministerial language here; and, it was well known they held another language in the other kingdom. This was only part of that littleness of conduct,
mixed

mixed with duplicity, that distinguished all the measures of the present ministry, and particularly in their conduct through this negotiation.

THIS system is pregnant with the worst consequences to both countries. Without administering any certain good to Ireland, it is to be accomplished, only by a surrender of her legislative independence. The participation threatens, on one hand, ruin to many of our most valuable manufacturies—and demands a surrender from Ireland ever too dear for her to pay for any advantages of trade so remote and uncertain as it may prove. A system loaded with such objections, and pregnant with such mischiefs to both countries, Mr. Fox declared he could not vote for.

FOR, monstrous as the sacrifices were, that had been attempted by ministry, to be made to Ireland, (in particular that of the power of renewing the East-India Company's Charter)—Destructive as this fourth proposition must prove to thousands of manufacturers in this kingdom—yet, nothing was more obvious, than this fact, that Ireland would reap no advantage whatever, as
the

the resumption of the British Parliament over that of Ireland takes a power that does away every idea of benefit to be expected from the participation of our trade.

NUMEROUS as the objections, against this proposition, really were, Mr. Fox declared he did not take upon him to say, that all the objections contained in them were yet found out. For, as more of them were discovered, the more they seemed to multiply, and grow daily stronger by their numbers. It was not therefore to be wondered, that ministry did every thing in their power to hurry them through Parliament. But let them beware of the consequences.

IMPREGNATED as the propositions are with the most alarming mischiefs to both countries, and foreign as they are to effect any one good purpose to either country, it was his (Mr. Fox's) duty to oppose them. For instead of producing benefits, they will certainly prove the source of the most unhappy consequences both to Great-Britain and to Ireland.

A C O R-

the redemption of the British Parliament
over that of Ireland: since a power that has
any weight in Ireland is to be exercised
from the British Parliament, not from the
Irish Parliament.

Nevertheless, as the only ground against this
proposition, namely, that the British Parliament
did not take upon him to say that all the
Irish, as well as the English, were to be bound
by the same laws, is a mere assertion, and
the more they seemed to multiply, and grow
daily stronger by the day, I was more
sensible of the weakness of the objection.



the right of the British Parliament to bind
the Irish, and the right of the Irish
Parliament to bind the British, are two
things, and both are to be established
and maintained by the same means, and
the same arguments. The British Parliament
is not to be bound by the Irish Parliament,
nor the Irish Parliament by the British
Parliament. The British Parliament is
to be bound by the British Parliament, and
the Irish Parliament by the Irish Parliament.

A
CORRECT LIST
OF THE
MINORITY
IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,
ON
MR. PITT'S
IRISH PROPOSITIONS.

L O N D O N:
PRINTED FOR J. DEBRETT,
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HOUSE OF COMMONS



IRISH PROPOSITIONS

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